Examining Racial Congruence of Students and School Personnel to Better Understand the Achievement Gap

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ABSTRACT

This quasi-experimental study examined the relationship between student achievement and racial congruence levels of school personnel and students. This was accomplished through the use of publically available data and quantitative analysis. The data, deriving from 2014-2015, was collected from 158 elementary schools in the Houston Independent School District and consisted of student and personnel demographics, percentage of economically disadvantaged students, and fifth-grade students' State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) examination scores in the areas of reading, math, and science of each school. Using the demographics data, the percentage of non-white personnel was compared to the percentage of non-white students, and schools were labeled as highly congruent, moderately congruent, or slightly congruent. While controlling for the percentage of economically disadvantaged students within each school, separate univariate ANCOVAs revealed racial congruence levels were significantly related to student achievement levels in the areas of reading and math but not science. Findings helped to clarify research from previous studies and resulted in recommendations for school leaders and teacher recruitment programs.

Keywords: Race, Student Achievement, Achievement Gap, Racial Congruence